

\$2

FEBRUARY 2021 | VOLUME 12 | ISSUE 2

YOUR DONATION BENEFITS THE VENDORS.
PLEASE BUY ONLY FROM BADGED VENDORS.

Corona relief package and what's next.
Page 10.



MEET YOUR
VENDOR:
**LARZELL
WASHINGTON,**
PAGE 3

GROUNDCOVER

NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.



Valentine's Day special pages 6 and 7.

BY LAURIE WECHTER

From the Groundcover board: Response to "The Special Edition"

In the January issue of Groundcover News, vendor Lit Kurtz criticized a new policy instituted by the board of directors which requires vendors to purchase four monthly issues for every special edition they buy. She explained that the new policy cuts into her profit margin in her business model that required customers to purchase the special edition in order to get a free copy of the monthly issue.

To understand the reasons for the policy change, it is important that we focus on the three pillars of our mission at Groundcover News.

- We give those experiencing economic difficulty the opportunity to earn money by selling a community newspaper.
- We raise awareness about issues related to poverty, housing insecurity and social justice.

- We give voice to those in our community who are often not heard.

We accomplish these goals by publishing a monthly newspaper to which all members of our community can contribute pertinent articles. We then publish the paper and make it available for those who sign up to become vendors. After the first free 10 copies, they purchase at the cost of publishing (50¢/paper). Vendors, who are independent contractors, can then go out and earn money by selling the paper at a set price of \$2 and keep the profit and gratuities. A few years ago, we introduced a special edition to highlight articles on selected topics and to facilitate vendors increasing their income as winter set in. Today, vendors purchase the special edition for \$2 and sell it for \$10.

Over the past few years, more vendors have incorporated the special edition to their daily sales plan.

While some offer it as an additional option to the monthly issue, an increasing number of vendors have moved to exclusively selling the special edition. As a result, while sales of our special edition have steadily gone up, circulation of our monthly issue has declined. While we support and encourage our vendors' micro-entrepreneurial spirit, we are also concerned.

The monthly issue is where we cover news and offer views on current issues and accomplish our mission to raise awareness. As an example, our January issue featured an article written by our intern Jaz Brennan regarding the University of Michigan's lack of involvement in providing its unoccupied spaces to shelter the homeless during this pandemic. This resulted in significant response and community engagement, ranging from alumni to other media outlets amplifying the issue.

We also do not want to alienate or turn off readers who do not want to spend \$10 but are happy to spend \$2. We feel that providing only the special edition at \$10 per copy erodes our goal to provide an affordable newspaper to the community. Advertising revenue has allowed us to keep the cost at which we wholesale to our vendors relatively low. The monthly publication is much more attractive to advertisers than the annual or semi-annual special edition but becomes significantly less attractive if the circulation numbers are low.

The board of directors, tasked with upholding the above stated mission, grappled with these concerns for several months. We struggled to find the right balance between allowing our vendors to maximize their

earnings by continuing to sell the special edition and maintaining our "brand" of an affordable community paper. The solution that we came up with was requiring a 4:1 ratio of monthly issues to special editions purchased. Our intentions were and continue to be to make our monthly issue available for purchase from any vendor, whether our readers choose to purchase the special edition or not.

After further deliberation at our January meeting, the board voted to amend our code of conduct to require vendors to make the monthly issue available when they are out selling papers. We also voted to reduce from 4:1 to 2:1 the ratio of monthly issues to special editions vendors must purchase. We will seek input from our vendors and customers as we continue to evaluate the policy. We thank you and encourage our readers to continue supporting our vendors through paper purchases and gratuities and help us with our mission by introducing us to their friends and neighbors.

— Laurie Wechter

LETTER TO EDITOR

The University of Michigan's tax-free status is one of the prime reasons that affordable housing in Ann Arbor is hardly "affordable." U-M owns significant tracts of land and, as an institution that pays zero in property taxes, is largely responsible for the city's very high rental rates, residential property taxes, and to some extent, the number of homeless people on the streets. That is why I was disturbed when Groundcover decided to feature, on its front cover, a photo of the recently installed sculpture, Jaume Plensa's 'Behind the Walls' that is on U-M's campus. The intended takeaway from the sculpture, according to the Art Museum's director, Christina Olsen, is to prompt "deep reflection on deliberate ignorance and collective inaction." This is a valuable message, but given U-M's oversized role in the city's housing problems, I don't think they deserve the positive advertising and prominent place they were afforded in a publication representing the poor and homeless. As a proofreader, I made my objection known about this choice before the paper went to press and I am relieved that there is a place to make my view known to our readership.

GROUNDCOVER

Mission

Creating opportunity and a voice for low-income people while taking action to end homelessness and poverty.

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MEET YOUR VENDOR



Larzell Washington, vendor No. 128

In one sentence, who are you? A man who loves people.

Where do you usually sell GCN? Main Street.

When and why did you start selling GCN? I started selling years ago because I love people.

If you could do anything for a day, what would it be? Talk to as many people as possible about love and healing.

What is your favorite thing to do in Ann Arbor? Talk to people about life.

What is your favorite spot in Ann Arbor? Nickels Arcade.

What motivates you to work hard selling Groundcover News? The people in my life.

What is a small thing that makes your day better? Good words.

What is the most impressive thing you know how to do? Communicate.

What is your favorite Valentine's Day candy? Snickers.

Book signing fundraiser

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT Groundcover vendor No. 56

Greetings to all of the readers of Groundcover News. I love writing and publishing new pieces. I want to ask all who read this article to support my book signing event in May 2021.

I became a published author in November 2019. The book is called *The Fold - A Collection of Poetry*. It is sold online on Barnes and Noble, Amazon, Kindle, Apple iTunes and Google Play. This is my life's dream.

I have not made enough sales to receive a royalty check thus far. I'm hopeful that my book will receive accolades, but I need your help to get there.

I've been writing for Groundcover News since July 2011, and am proud to

be a part of it. I have met a lot of people from that time to this present day. There are a lot of talented, interesting people in Wash-tenaw County. Most of the people I meet have a positive impact on my life.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this event will be held outdoors for social distancing. I will announce the date and time in the May 2021 issue of Groundcover News. Thank you all and have a Happy Valentine's Day!!!

If you choose to support this upcoming event, please send donations to La Shawn Courtwright P.O. Box 8126 Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107. You may send a check, money order, Cash App or Venmo. She uses La Shawn Courtwright for Cash App and Venmo.

Joyfully beautifying the places I live

DENISE SHEARER Groundcover vendor No. 490

I like to decorate my home with joyful and pretty pictures I cut out from magazines. I make collages to hang up with tape on my apartment walls. I do this because I can't paint or hang up pictures with nails. I also like to put up festive Christmas decorations all year long.

Other decorations I like to use in my home are plastic toys such as frogs,

turtles, dollhouses and dolls. I really like to collect and decorate with these toys because they remind me of my childhood. I find a lot of these special decorations at the thrift and dollar stores.

Having a pretty, decorated place makes me feel more comfortable and relaxed in my space. Keeping my home clean does too. I like to turn on the TV or radio for some company while I clean. I love beautifying the places I live.

Exciting time ahead at Boober Tours



KEVIN SPANGLER
Groundcover vendor No. 307

the owner, said, "We could have not done this without you."

These comments make me feel appreciated for all the hard work we put in every day. Boober Tours is adding more motors and batteries to the fleet to help with our long-distance rides of up to 3.5 miles. With the success of our Treehouse 603 advertising trailer, we now are building a fourth trailer to satisfy our next long-term advertising deal for Kushy Punch — a sponsor from last year.

With the continued sponsorship of Treehouse, we will be completing the Android version of the GoBoober app. Once we master this new technology, we will be adding unique features to keep our customers engaged.

The respectful and positive propaganda marketing strategy is working better than expected. We are extremely happy with the advertisement progress, and Treehouse 603 is very happy with our cross-promotional strategy. Chris Ly,

The Black family in transition

"Of all the rocks upon which we build our lives, we are reminded today that family is the most important. And we are called to recognize and honor how critical every father is to that foundation... But if we are honest with ourselves, we'll admit that too many fathers also are missing—missing from too many lives and too many homes... You and I know how true this is in the African-American community. We know that more than half of all black children live in single-parent households, a number that has doubled — doubled — since we were children. ... And the foundations of our community are weaker because of it."

— President Barack Obama

Shortly after President Barack Obama expressed his candid opinion about the importance of fatherhood in the African American family, the award-winning journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates issued a quick rebuttal. He said, "from the White House on down, the myth holds that fatherhood is the antidote to all that ails Black people... In 2011, Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, responding to violence among young Black males, put the blame on the family: 'too many men making too many babies they don't want to take care of, and then we end up dealing with your children'... The thread is as old as Black politics itself. It is also wrong. The kind of trenchant racism to which Black people have been persistently subjected to, cannot be defeated by making the victims more respectable."

Bradford Wilcox and Linda Malone-Colon said in their June 12, 2014 essay for the Institute of Family Studies that Coates was right about the impact of racism and centuries of segregation on the African American experience. However, on the issue of "the importance of father-present homes for the welfare of African Americans, Barack Obama, not Ta-Nehisi, gets it right."

This historical perspective on the enormous contributions made by mothers and Black female-headed households, addresses issues that Coates raised in his award-winning essay, "The Case for Reparations." Those issues include a chronicle of "the poisonous legacy of slavery, Jim Crow, and contemporary racial segregation for generations of African Americans — past and present."

Why the theme African American family?

Every year since 2018, Groundcover News has published articles to help



WILL SHAKESPEARE
Groundcover vendor No. 258

celebrate Black History Month in February. Last year, the theme from the Association for the Study of African American Life and History was "The African American Vote." In 2021 the theme is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity." Last year's article sparked some conversations about whether the hands that used to pick cotton will pick the new president and vice-president of the United States, and whether a Black woman would be elected president or vice president.

The Black vote, especially the Black female vote, catapulted Joe Biden from the primaries to the office of president in the election of November 2020. His vice-presidential running mate, Kamala Harris, made history as the first woman, the first Black American woman, and the first Asian American woman to get sworn into the nation's second highest office. It is important to know that Kamala Harris was seven years old when her father and mother divorced. Her mother was a single parent when she raised her and her sister to adulthood as Black Americans in Oakland, California. Both Barack Obama and Kamala Harris were raised by single moms. Bravo!!

The Controversial 1965 Moynihan Report on the Black family

Sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan was Assistant Secretary of Labor, an office of policy planning and research, in President Lyndon B. Johnson's administration in the mid-1960s. Moynihan produced a highly controversial report titled, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action." Moynihan believed that his report on the Black family would be a significant contribution to President Johnson's war on poverty and income inequality. His report raised more questions than answers, and he was accused of blaming victims of inequality instead of exposing truths.

Dr. Andre Perry, a journalist, educator and scholar-in-residence at the Washington D. C. think tank Brookings Institute published research findings

that Moynihan's report was wrong and misleading. Perry's book, "Know Your Price: Valuing Black Lives and Property in America's Black Cities," tends to contradict Moynihan's findings.

Perry criticized the Moynihan report for setting a horrible example of blaming poverty on Black women's marital behaviors, living arrangements and matriarchal family structure. With women as the head of the family, the report argued that Black children would grow up in poverty, drugs and crime.

Perry grew up in Wilkinsburg, a predominantly poor Black town next to Pittsburgh, Pa. He was raised by a single mom, never knew his father, and he later learned that his father died in a prison near Detroit. Perry managed to beat the odds and he is now a resident scholar at a prestigious policy think tank.

After a careful new analysis of the state of Black America, Perry flips the narrative on the racial wealth gap, asserting that Black women are not the problem, but the solution. Perry challenged the 1965 report and wrote his own report on the state of the Black family. His belief is that what changed the most, and what is most conspicuous, is the devaluation of assets in Black neighborhoods and the inner cities of large urban metropolises like Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Chicago. Asset devaluation has increased the racial wealth gap between Blacks and whites. He called on Congress to start reparation talks.

History on African Americans setbacks and losses

Owning land was the ideological priority for Black families after the American Civil War when nearly four million people were freed from slavery. The promise of free lands to former slave families did not come to fruition. In 1876, only five percent of Black families in the South owned land. But a new group of Black land owners soon established themselves. Many had experience in the fields and they began buying farms, often in places with arid or swampy soil. By 1920, African Americans, who made up 10% of the population, represented 14% of Southern farm owners.

This sudden rise in land ownership by African Americans was met with hate, envy and hostility. The white supremacist backlash spread across the South. The movement called "Whitecaps" was created at the end of the 19th century to terrorize Black landowners and take their land property with impunity.

The Morgan State Institute for Urban Research stated, "Whitecaps, led by

poor white farmers, accosted black landowners at night, beating them or threatening murder if they didn't abandon their homes." The Whitecaps killed a Black man, Henty List, in Lincoln County, Miss. In Forsyth County, Georgia, the violent mob forced 50 African American farmers and their family members to flee in one day. In 1912, they drove away almost an entire population of 1,000 people. Ray Winbush, the Director of the Institute for Urban Research at Morgan State University noted, "There is this idea that most Blacks were lynched because they did something untoward to a young woman. That is not true. Most Blacks were lynched between 1890 and 1920 because whites wanted their lands."

How Black lives changed since MLK

PBS News Hour aired a report in January 2020 comparing and contrasting the statistical information on Black lives since the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The report stated:

"In 1968, only 10% of white people lived below the poverty level, while 34% of African Americans did. White job-seekers in 1968 made up 2.6% of applicants while Black job-seekers made up 6.7% of applicants. In 2020, the Black poverty rate is 21%, almost three times that of the white population."

There has not been enough improvement.

"Another troubling and controversial aspect of Black social progress — or lack of it — is how many Black families are headed by single women. In the 1960s unmarried women were the main bread-winners for about 20% of households. In recent years (2020), the percentage has risen as high as 72%," said Sharon Austin, the PBS News Hour Host of the Conversation Show about the rapid rise in female-led households. "This is important, but not because of some sexist ideal of the family. In the U.S. as across the Americas, there is a powerful connection between poverty and female-headed households."

Black communities have been disproportionately affected by this latest form of discrimination — frontline exposure to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important for local, state and federal governments to help the millions of people — especially Black families — who are suffering and dying due to the pandemic, economic crisis, social dislocation, massive health care needs and social isolation. For Black History Month, let's hope economic remedies are given to Black families across the nation.

Economic tyranny denies the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness

"This wise old whiskey fish swims up to three young fish and goes, 'Morning, boys, how's the water?' and swims away; and the three young fish watch him swim away and look at each other and go, 'What the [hell] is water?' and swim away."

— Infinite Jest by David Foster Wallace

When was the last time that you stood out in the cold for more than an hour? If you can't remember, try it. Then imagine being out there all night with nowhere warm to go as the sun sets and temperatures plummet. The icy wind cuts like a knife, sending shivers all down your body as you huddle in a thin sweatshirt and wet socks. You remain there, waiting for God knows what, and you endure the cold.

Each year millions of Americans face the harsh reality of homelessness, and even more dangle just above it by mere threads — one car repair or health care bill away from destitution. It doesn't take all that much to push this precarious state over the edge.

Then COVID-19 came. As if killing hundreds of thousands of Americans wasn't bad enough, it also left millions jobless, food-insecure and evicted. And yet, despite the economic downturn that caused suffering among the working class, the stock market soared. Billionaires have increased their wealth by billions more. Corrupt politicians lined their pockets with insider trading. Giant corporations swallowed up money earmarked for small



BEN GIRODIAS
Groundcover contributor

corporations in the CARES Act. If class conflict was a little league game, it would have been called by the mercy rule long ago. These discouraging contradictions just can't go on.

So how did we get here?

While these large-scale structural failures have many causes, I suggest that the most prominent cause of these dystopic societal contradictions is economic tyranny. When I say economic tyranny, I mean the power held by the avariciously wealthy in our society who impose their will upon the working class for their own selfish gain.

For a democratic country, the fact that the vast majority of its population surrenders all decision-making power for 40 hours a week is astonishing in the most horrifying sense of the word. Bosses dictate what you do at work with impunity. You have no recourse other than quitting, but without a job, you are at risk of starvation or homelessness.

Liberty cannot exist only in the political arena because our economic structure controls what we can or

cannot do in life. Without economic rights, political rights are hollow niceties.

According to the Declaration of Independence, we have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. But the right to life is impotent without the ability to sustain it. We all require having our basic needs to live met. Thus, when our society denies these necessities to some of its members, it is denying their right to life.

In the same way, denying adequate education denies liberty, as freedom of thought depends on critical thinking. Learning how to think critically requires comparing and contrasting competing ideas. This requires a proper and equitable education. And in a similar way, becoming overwhelmed by debt or getting stuck in a dead-end exploitative minimum-wage job decimates one's resolve and ability to pursue happiness.

How many can be happy, laboring away for mere scraps of what they produce? Thus, the current societal structure, which regularly denies people access to power in the workplace and basic necessities, also then denies their right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness.

The most insidious kind of prison is one so total that the prisoner doesn't even realize they are locked up. Blind adherence to cultural mythology perpetuates economic tyranny. The most harmful aspect of the current political-economic structure is the sanitized version of cruelty and violence

Liberty cannot exist only in the political arena because our economic structure controls what we can or cannot do in life. Without economic rights, political rights are hollow niceties.

presented to the general public. Those with the power to change the harmful societal structures are insulated from the great harm that these structures cause, which allows the structures to continue without effective resistance.

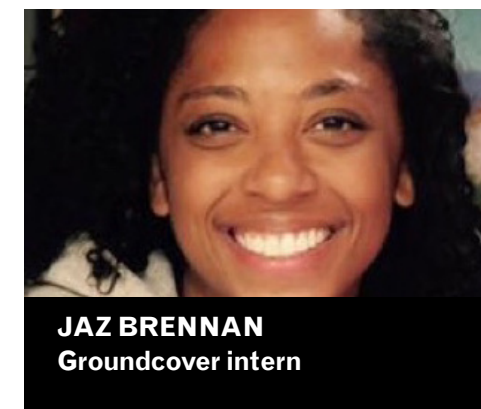
Millions of Americans refuse to wear masks because they don't see the bodies piling up in freezer trucks behind hospitals. Millions support bloated police budgets because they don't know how our incarceration system destroys lives. Millions do not question the economic structures in place because those most harmed are shoved out of view in our overcrowded prisons and homeless shelters.

And so I ask you to take a second from your busy day. Stop. Look around. Listen to those who speak up. And think. Sometimes the most ubiquitous things surrounding us are the most difficult to talk about. But we need to. Otherwise, we are doomed to continue the unnecessary suffering of our fellow humans.

To vaccinate or not to vaccinate...

On Monday, December 14, 2020, trucks packed with a newly approved COVID-19 vaccine rolled into cities and towns to set up shop for distribution. A highly anticipated event, as by December, over 1.6 million people had perished from the disease, more than 300 thousand of those in the United States alone.

The vaccine was furiously sought by many labs and drug companies. In the end, two took the lead: Moderna and Pfizer. Both vaccines are mRNA derived, which is different and new from what we have seen of vaccines previously. Instead of using small amounts of non-viable virus, mRNA enters into the cells and produces the viral protein spike which allows the body to recognize it as an intruder and



JAZ BRENNAN
Groundcover intern

produce antibodies to defeat it. Plainly put, mRNA acts as a blueprint for our immune system to fight back.

Both Moderna and Pfizer report seeing 95% efficacy in preventing illness and complications. Although a small number of vaccinated people

still became infected with coronavirus, only one was more than a minor case, suggesting that the vaccines are close to perfect in preventing serious illness from COVID-19.

However, vaccines are only effective if you can convince people to take them. As the rollout amps up, so does the variance in people's willingness to be inoculated.

There are two obvious camps here: 'yes, I will take it' and 'no, get that thing away from me'. Within each reaction, there's a spectrum of reasons why and how people are making their decisions.

According to Groundcover News volunteer Jon MacDonald-Dumler, it's all about the science.

"We have to believe in science," said

MacDonagh-Dumler. "We must have hope - I feel [the vaccine] is a good idea and it's going to help."

This is not an uncommon phrase heard from proponents of the vaccination. Many are choosing to believe officials who advocate for the safety and effectiveness of the Covid vaccine.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, has striven to strengthen the confidence of those waffling with the decision. Misinformation and divisive rhetoric has left some worrying that they don't have enough facts to make the right decision. Still some choose the shot and are relieved to

see **VACCINE** page 9 ➡

Valentine, valentine, wherefore art thou valentine?

Given our attachment to Valentine's Day, it is curious to consider all the many legends that add up to one great holiday! It is popularly believed that Valentine's Day is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of a Christian martyr, St. Valentine, who died in 270 A.D. Digging deeper, it is widely reported that the Catholic Church decided to place St. Valentine's feast day in the middle of February in an effort to "Christianize" the pagan celebration of Lupercalia. Lupercalia was a fertility festival dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, as well as to the founders of Rome — Romulus and Remus.

Historical accounts claim that Lupercalia would commence with an order of Roman priests gathering at a sacred cave where the infants Romulus and Remus were believed to have been raised by a she-wolf or "lupa."

The priests would sacrifice a goat for fertility and a dog for purification. The priests then took the goat hides to the streets and would gently slap the women and crops to promote fertility.

Lupercalia survived the initial rise of Christianity but was outlawed — as it was deemed "un-Christian" — at the end of the fifth century when Pope Gelasius declared February 14 to be St. Valentine's Day.

It was much later that the holiday became definitively associated with love. During the Middle Ages, it was commonly believed in France and England that February 14 was the beginning of birds' mating seasons, which helped spawn the idea that the middle of February should be a day for romance.

The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different martyred saints named Valentine. One story contends that Valentine was a 3rd century Roman priest. When Emperor Claudius II decided that single men made



LAURIE WECHTER
Groundcover contributor

better soldiers than men with families, he outlawed marriage for young men. Valentine, a decided romantic, defied Claudius and continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. Claudius was made aware of this and had Valentine unceremoniously beheaded. Another story contends that the day was named after Saint Valentine of Terni (who also lost his head).

Another rationale for our special holiday is that Valentine may have lost his head for attempting to help Christians escape brutal Roman prisons. While imprisoned for his actions, Valentine was said to have sent the first "valentine" greeting after he fell in love with a young girl. It has been posited that the girl was his jailor's daughter, who visited him regularly in the dark dungeon. Before his death, he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that may explain the name's origins.

One thing we can say for sure is that St. Valentine's stories emphasize his appeal as a sympathetic, valiant and romantic figure. In all, there are perhaps a dozen St. Valentines on the official Roman Catholic roster of saints. Because "Valentinus" (from the Latin word for worthy, strong or powerful) was a popular surname between the 2nd and 8th centuries, many men and martyrs over that period carried that surname. There was even a Pope Valentine who served a mere 40 days around 827 A.D.

According to History.com, enough confusion surrounds the true identity of St. Valentine that the Catholic Church discontinued "liturgical veneration" of him in 1969, though his name remains on its list of officially recognized saints.

Valentine's Day, as we know and love it, began to be popularly celebrated around the 17th century by the United States, Canada, Mexico, France, Australia and Great Britain.

By the middle of the 18th century, it was common for friends or lovers to exchange small tokens of affection or handwritten notes on February 14. In the 1840s, Esther A. Howland began selling the first mass-produced valentines cards in America. Howland, known as the "Mother of the Valentine," made elaborate creations with handmade lace, ribbons, colorful pictures known as "scrap."

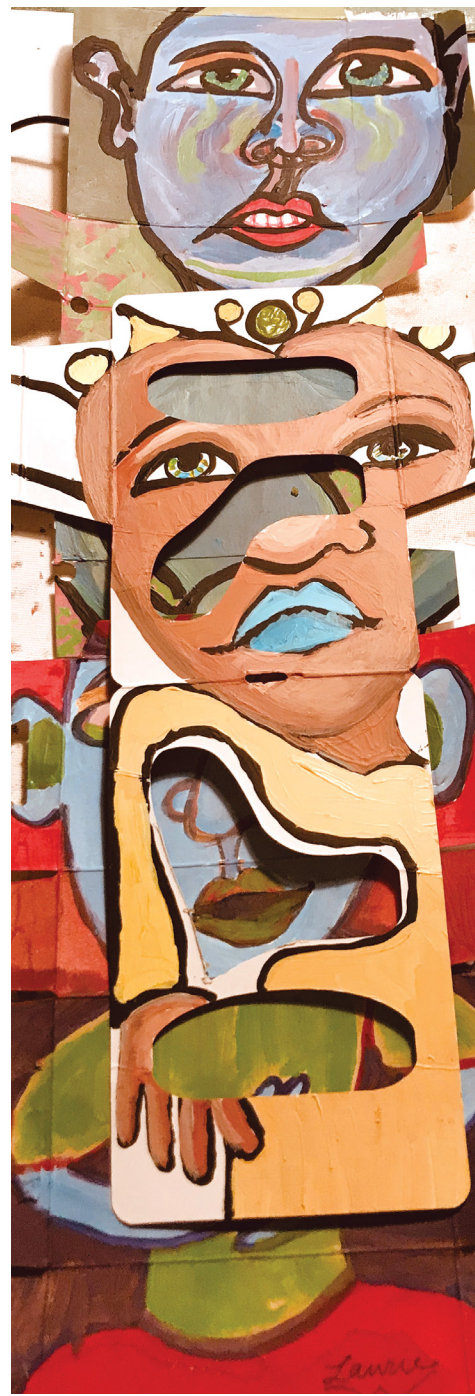
By the 20th century, printed cards began to replace written letters due to improvements in printing technology. Ready-made cards were an easy way for people to express their emotions given that direct expression of one's feelings was discouraged at that time. Cheaper postage rates also contributed to an increase in the popularity of sending Valentine's Day greetings.

Today, according to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated 145 million Valentine's Day cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second-largest card-sending holiday of the year other than Christmas.

This year Valentine's Day carries great importance in the face of the forced isolation we have endured over the past year. In this age of social media, it is a holiday that holds steadfastly to the idea of putting one's feelings into concrete form. Love is perhaps the most beautiful human sentiment and it is important to give it notice.

Please join me in making and sending Valentine's cards to the people you

most care for. It will provide something concrete to those who you can only virtually see. Happy Valentine's Day to you and a hope that this year will be full of love for everyone!



Acrylic painting, "Totem," by Laurie Wechter.

We love our vendors — and know you do too!

GROUNDCOVER STAFF

We are so proud of the resiliency of our vendors over the past year, keeping smiles underneath their masks, overcoming the sales obstacles that this pandemic presented, and helping keep our community safe. Any patron of Groundcover knows that without our passionate and hard-working Groundcover vendors, this newspaper wouldn't be celebrating its tenth year

of news and solutions from the ground up.

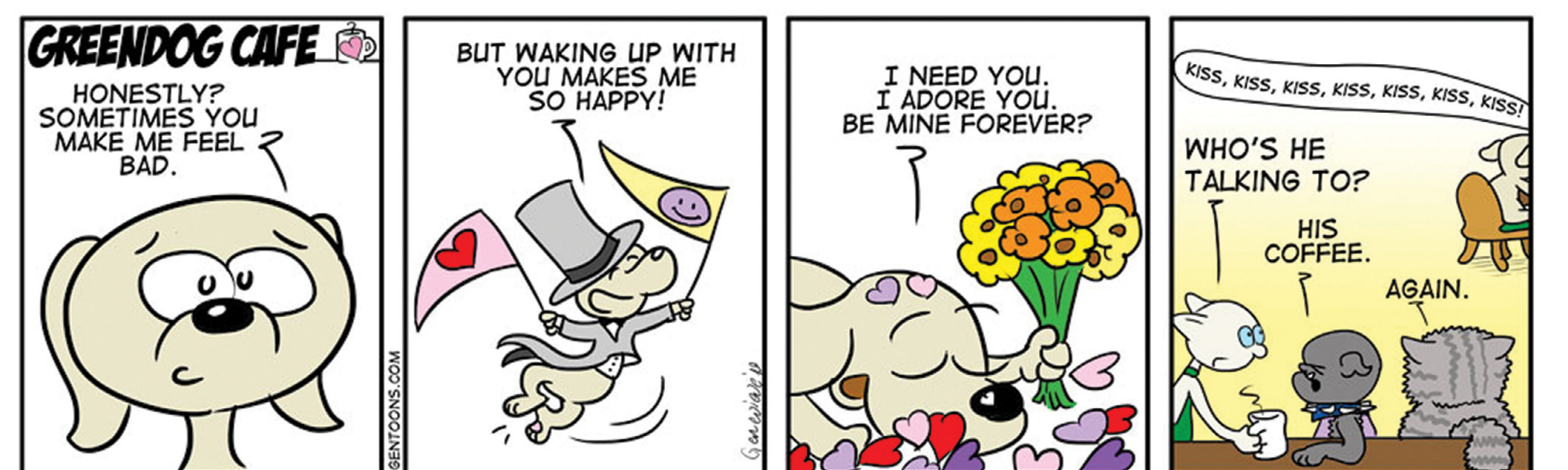
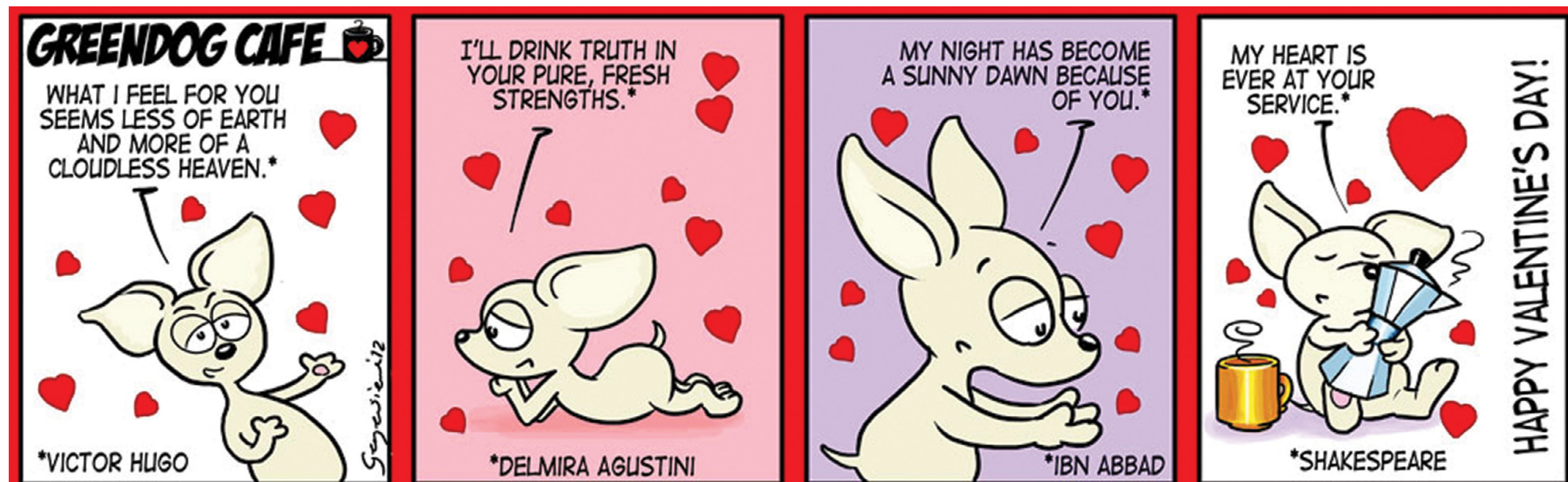
This time last February, Groundcover was getting ready to celebrate International Vendor Week alongside other street papers in the International Network of Street Papers. International Vendor Week is always a special time to not only celebrate the people who make this organization so special — our vendors, but also remember the importance and legitimacy of this

work of selling street papers. In the past, Ann Arborites would buddy-up to sell with our vendors on the street, or coordinate special deliveries of hot cocoa and other treats. However, this year, because of reduced INSP programming due to COVID-19, we are doing things a little differently and only celebrating Vendor Week locally.

Groundcover Vendor Appreciation Week 2021 is February 7-14, and we will need your help to make it a special

time. If you see your vendor out and about, take a moment to thank them for practicing COVID-19 protocols, express the meaning of your friendship with them, or let them know how much their commitment to the paper means to you.

The cartoons pictured below include some Valentine's messages community members sent to Groundcover vendors out of love and appreciation.



Discovering Crazy Wisdom

KEN PARKS
Groundcover contributor

Our human heritage is up for debate. Time for basic research. Who are we? Where do we start? Our most exalted ancestors have taught us that reality is not what it appears to be. Impermanence is basic in all views that respect the truth of observation, analysis and reflection. Likewise with actions and their results. The aspiration for truth is so strong and the desire for results is so tempting that we often get stuck on partial truths that we fixate on until impermanence disappoints us again or delights us with surprises.

Crazy wisdom dwells in the unseen and its vast display of appearances. These two words, which everyone in Ann Arbor knows because of the bookstore, were made popular by Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche who helped establish a Kaygu school of Tibetan Buddhism in the United Kingdom.

When Aura Glaser and Sandy Finkel — future owners of Crazy Wisdom Bookstore — came back from India in the early 80s, they were dedicated students of the Gelugpa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. They meditated with the Kagyu center in

Ann Arbor and began the work of opening the Jewel Heart Center. From this vast inspiration for enlightenment, Aura began planning the Crazy Wisdom Bookstore.

From our common aspiration to benefit all sentient beings, our information sharing ran deep. Aura learned about a dilapidated storefront that would lease for a good price — especially if she fixed it up. It was on Ann Street between 4th and 5th Avenues and around the corner from the People's Food Co-op. The building's old plaster had cracks everywhere and needed a lot of work.

I helped with the renovation of Crazy Wisdom. Much of the plaster between the cracks was poorly bonded to the wood lath underneath. The amount of demolition and repair was well beyond my estimate but the collective energy and the primordial flow was so high that I finished in good time for the amount of work and felt no need to raise the price.

Liberated work has a value that cannot be measured in money. That is why people are often happy to do volunteer work and donate many resources for the common good. It's a kind of crazy wisdom. Sacred work is born from the completeness of being in the moment. It taps into the

common wisdom we all share and comes to fruition in incredible displays of creation.

I was happy to see the 25th-anniversary issue of Crazy Wisdom Community Journal. It awoke many memories and experiences of the freedom we discover when we explore the commons together. There is no algorithm that takes you to any form of wisdom. Creative participation works well if our innate empathy is encouraged.



Crazy Wisdom is a tea house and bookstore located on S. Main Street.

Our Statement of Solidarity with Black Lives Matter

From its inception, **Groundcover News** has approached all its activities with belief in the following principles, as written on our website:

- All people have the right to dignity.
- Diversity has intrinsic value.
- Poverty is political — systemic change is necessary.
- Building community is essential to social change.
- Political effectiveness requires staying power.
- Solutions to poverty must involve people who are directly affected.
- Risks are necessary to create positive change.
- Meeting people where they are honors their skills and potential.
- We are committed to quality, professionalism, and accountability in everything we do.

We feel our attachment to these principles even more strongly today. If they resonate with you too, and you are looking for a way to make a difference during these life-changing times, please join us as a volunteer, supporter, friend or Board Member. To let us know, email: contact@groundcovernews.com.

Sudoku

★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

2	9		6		5			
8	6	5						
	1			3			9	
		9			1		8	6
		6			4			
7	4		3			9		
	7			4			6	
						5	2	4
			9		8		1	7

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

◆ VACCINE from page 5

have the protection it confers. "It's like a car," stated community member Lisa Gizzi. "I don't know how any of that works, but I trust the mechanics who do."

It seems reasonable to have trust in a system that has been growing and evolving over many years, developing some of the most impressive medical advances seen throughout our history. However, history may just be the reason others refuse.

"The vaccine is bullshit," said Groundcover vendor, Joe Woods. "Maybe it'd be good if it was done right, but this is a money scheme from the government - you never know what they're putting in it."

"I'm not getting that shot!" exclaimed Groundcover vendor Gary Robinson. "I don't want to be tracked or nothing. I just don't worry about it, that'll only cause more problems."

These statements may seem hyperbolic, however, medicine has a sour history of exploiting communities of color in the name of medical progress.

Many are aware of the Tuskegee study where over the period of 40 years the United States Public Health Service falsely treated 600 impoverished Black men diagnosed with syphilis. The goal of this violation was to study the effects and progression of the untreated disease

Perhaps not as commonly discussed is the long standing medical mistreatment of the Black community. Forced sterilizations, historic inequity of

healthcare access and resources, as well as the use of Black bodies for medical experimentation are just the tip of the iceberg of structural medical violence that communities of color have faced.

Others take issue not with what's in the vaccine, but who gets what out of it. Another vendor, Derek Allen, noted his concern about the quick turn around of the product.

"It's a setup. [The government] made the virus and spread it so they could sell the vaccine. It's all for the money."

In a time where capitalism is being called into question, the concept of the vaccine being just another financial swindle isn't too far outside the realm of possibility.

Others still declare concerns of the long term effects.

Groundcover vendor Larzell Washington makes it clear that he is not planning to take the vaccine. Washington reports hearing too many mixed messages regarding the potential for problems from the vaccine down the road.

"If it ain't broke, don't fix it," concludes Washington.

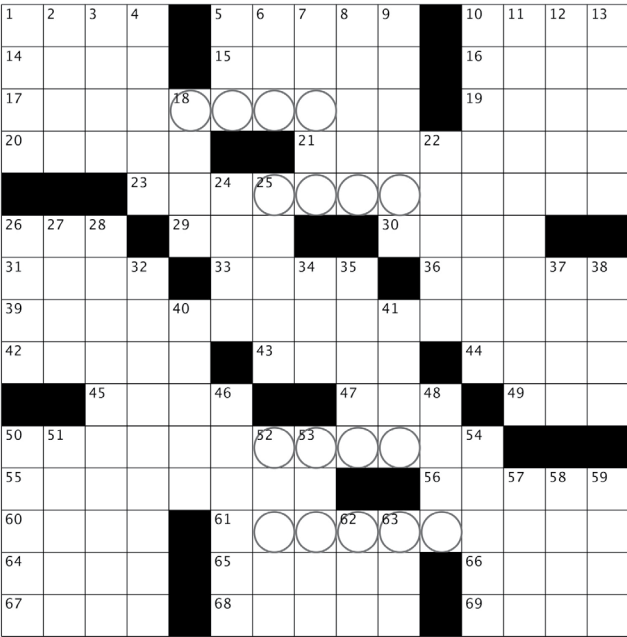
Groundcover publisher Susan Beckett admitted to an earlier reluctance to being one of the first to take the vaccine because of it's foreshortened approval process and new technology. However, as she learned more, that ambivalence has changed to an eagerness to get vaccinated.

"Once I learned that the vaccine essentially introduces my immune system to a geometric shape associated with the coronavirus without

Art Centers Peter A. Collins

- ACROSS**
1. Nonsense
 5. Bonobo cousin, for short
 10. Key of Schubert's Op. 147, e.g.
 14. 1977 Turov novel
 15. Columbus' birthplace
 16. "___ & Stitch"
 17. Items with decreasing value?
 19. Asian soup noodle
 20. Jam sounds
 21. "How boring!"
 23. Feature of some book pages
 26. Roadie's tote
 29. Bulls, on a scoreboard
 30. Boating hazard
 31. Cut-up
 33. Mournful cry
 36. Words on some diet food labels
 39. Part of a home decor team (and a hint to the circled letters)
 42. Von Fürstberg of fashion
 43. It might hang around Beijing
 44. Angered
 45. Old ruler
 47. Annoy
 49. "The Raven" poet
 50. Contacted via mail, perhaps
 55. Took a break
 56. "Stand and Deliver" Oscar nominee James Edward ___
 60. Pain
 61. Doc bloc
 64. Honey ___ (Nabisco brand)
 65. Set in motion
 66. Jai ___
 67. Android buys
 68. For ___ sake!
 69. Boxer's protest, perhaps?

- DOWN**
1. Kid
 2. Fall-place connector



Peter A. Collins

3. Swerve
4. Savanna sight
5. Pixar technique, briefly
6. "Do you mean that woman?"
7. How tuna is packed, often
8. Three-card hustle
9. Quarterback, often
10. Thick sticks
11. Halter alternative
12. Take out ___ (borrow money)
13. Mah ___
18. PC processing unit
22. Capital resident on the Arabian Peninsula
24. Tea shop offering
25. Drug bust amounts
26. Like the desert
27. BMW subsidiary
28. Salty snack
32. Shifty transportation?
34. Sling filler
35. Waste
37. Sleek, slangily
38. Word with farm or house
40. Gathers
41. Business leader?
46. Send off again
48. Granny, for one
50. Unwanted social turmoil
51. ESPN feature
52. Best Director winner between Costner and Eastwood
53. Put into effect
54. Super Bowl XXXIII MVP
57. Yard pest
58. By mouth
59. Omit
62. Miss named?
63. 50% of 16-Across

Is COVID-19 making it hard to make ends meet?

If you're struggling to keep up with rent, mortgage, or utilities payments, or need help paying for food, childcare, or gas for your car the **Barrier Buster Network** is here to support you.

Visit **Washtenaw.org/2818** or contact one of these Barrier Busters agencies to help you pay your bills as soon as possible:

Housing Access for Washtenaw County

Phone: 734.961.1999
Website: housingaccess.net

Washtenaw Health Plan

Phone: 734.544.3030
Website: www.washtenaw.org/WHP

SOS Community Services

Phone: 734.484.5411
Website: www.soscs.org

Jewish Family Services

Phone: 734.769.0209
Website: jfsannarbor.org

Corona relief package and what's next

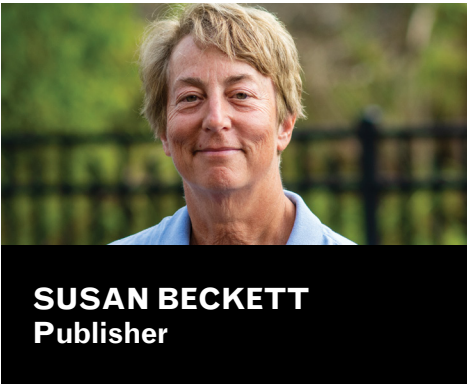
The Corona Relief Package passed by Congress in December 2020 was a stop-gap measure. It extended the eviction moratorium only through January 31, 2021, and provided only \$25 billion in eviction assistance funding. The individual stimulus checks of \$600, which go automatically to tax filers, won't help with much more than a month's worth of bills.

Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, the new chair of the Senate Banking Committee and a member of the Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, pledged on a call with housing advocates to devote the remainder of his career to housing — an aspect of his committee that is usually overlooked and underfunded. Brown asserted that housing affects everything — safety, education and health. He intends to pass fair housing protections in the first 100 days of the new Congress, which is a time that has historically been devoted to the banking concerns of Wall Street.

"This year it will be about making ordinary people's lives better," said Brown.

Brown expects the new Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Marcia Fudge, to be a great ally. Fudge is a former Congresswoman from Cleveland and is intimately familiar with the challenges of housing.

Once immediate needs are taken care of, such as the vaccination of



teachers and funding for state and local governments, Brown will prioritize building more affordable housing. He sees opportunities to build coming in an infrastructure bill. He sees opportunities to link housing developments to job centers in transportation bills. And he sees opportunities to build the Housing Trust Fund which will enable local housing authorities to build more units.

In Brown's opinion, passing another comprehensive COVID-19 relief package is more important than punishing those who stormed the capitol. The CARES Act, passed in the spring of 2020, kept 13 million people out of poverty, according to Brown. Keeping them afloat is his priority at the moment. He wants vigilant oversight to ensure that the relief money goes to those who need it most.

The National Low-Income Housing Coalition echoed Brown's concerns by

calling for a Biden executive order on day one of his presidency to extend the eviction moratorium through the end of the pandemic which he did on day two. The Coalition also called for clarity from the Department of Treasury on rental assistance guidelines so that money can be dispersed quickly to the targeted populations. Allowing self-certification rather than burdensome documentation requirements would greatly streamline the process.

Another concern is including renters in difficult circumstances. If landlords decline to participate in rental assistance programs, the Housing Coalition would like to redirect the assistance to the renters. They also recommend allowing assistance for renters who do not have formal leases or who reside in public housing. This has been a common roadblock for Groundcover vendors — many of whom have informal, short-term rental arrangements.

Rental assistance preference is designated for those who earn less than 50% of the Area Median Income. Building on experience from the CARES Act implementation, the Housing Coalition is calling for a significant portion of the funds to be targeted to those whose incomes are under 30% of Area Median Income. They also suggest a lottery for assistance rather than a first-come-first-served model.

Entities with a population of at least

200,000 are eligible to receive rental assistance funds directly. Washtenaw County qualifies, but the cities and townships that comprise it do not. Therefore the County will again be the intermediary between Treasury and agencies that disperse funds to renters.

The American Rescue Plan, unveiled by President Biden in mid-January, calls for \$5 billion in water and utility assistance for struggling renters, \$5 billion to secure housing for those at risk of or experiencing homelessness, and an additional \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance to cover back rent for low-and moderate-income households who have lost their income. These funds, in addition to those in earlier bills, still fall \$30 billion short of the \$100 billion called for by housing experts. Renters have already accrued \$70 billion in debt and back fees on missed payments, according to Moody's Analytics.

Experience has shown that those most in need are generally the least able to marshal the resources for a quick assistance application. A weighted lottery for rental assistance can further enhance the chances that those most affected by the pandemic are more likely to get aid. Outreach, intake assistance and other application assets are also essential in extremely vulnerable communities.

Groundcover Vendor Code during COVID-19

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper. COVID-19 specific requirements agreed to by vendors following new training.

- I will wear a mask at all times while selling Groundcover News.
- I will use gloves, hand sanitizer or wash with soap to remove germs from my hands before selling and as needed between customers.
- I will stay 6 feet away from others.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor

reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current monthly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling past monthly issues.

ing past monthly issues.

- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my

own well-being and income.

- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor corner policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

Insurrection on the Hill

KEAGAN IRRER Op-ed contributor

Condemnation of violence, without equally condemning the individuals and institutions responsible for cultivating and enabling it, is an utterly hollow, futile and self-serving gesture.

Storming the Capitol building waving a Confederate battle flag — a symbol of armed rebellion against the Constitution as well as the lawful and duly elected government of the United States — for the sole purpose of overturning the results of a fair and free democratic election is a violent action. In many cases, the violence has been condemned, but it is easy to disparage their actions

without acknowledging what led to them. Those who stormed the Capitol to use violence and intimidation to achieve their political ends are simply terrorists.

The Republican party has consciously courted certain voting blocs for decades. They, along with explicit media structures, have conditioned some of their loyal voters into fanatics. They seek not truth but blindly follow as they are told. It is the only way to accomplish their aims, and all ethics and truth must stand aside as they march towards their greatest goals — a vision of an America that will never be anything more than a delusion.

Long before Trump, the Republican party and their allies dedicated

much time and effort to cultivating blind loyalty from their base. They have succeeded, the natural consequence of deliberate processes. Trump merely found a base of voters willing to follow a man who could contradict himself within the same sentence and still fervently believe his every word.

Perhaps he has gone to greater extremes than those before him, but the circumstances were set perfectly for him as a result of the decisions of the Republican party. It was not surprising that he was able to take his voters this far.

His base was built long before him and will remain a potent force in politics no matter what happens to him. These people are not going away; the

Republican party may condemn them, but they will still take their votes.

And there will be no condemnation from the party for all of the officials and legislators who fed the delusion of a rigged election. Every media member, legislator and public official that has entertained, even for a moment — the delusional bile now being spewed at the highest levels of government — is responsible for the violence that occurred at the Capitol.

There will be no real condemnation, because this is the Republican party — not just now but for the foreseeable future.

Was January sixth a viable insurrection or the dying gasp of resistance sensing epic change?

SUSAN BECKETT

The storming of the Capitol by an angry mob hunting for Vice President Pence and Democratic Members of Congress shook the American public. Many claim it is a backlash from white America losing its grip on superiority while others see it as a harbinger of change.

Consider this excerpt from a statement from Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II and Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis of the Poor People's Campaign:

"Such violence always erupts when there is the greatest possibility for change. Throughout history, Native and Indigenous people have seen this kind of mob violence. Black people have seen it. Women have seen it. Asians have seen it. Latino farmworkers have seen it. Workers standing for labor rights have seen it. What we saw this week is not the dream of America, but it has too often been the practice of America.

"This week's violence is a reaction to the record turnout of people of every race, income, region, sexuality, creed, and conviction. It was a reaction to the people who voted for candidates that pledged to expand health care, raise wages, address systemic racism and poverty in the general election and the Georgia run-off. It took place as we witnessed cracks in the southern strategy, which has kept people divided by race for decades. This was an assault rooted in a refusal to believe the

legitimacy of an election where people of color and poor and low wealth people united to vote out an extremist president and Republican Senate majority."

The economic policy plan unveiled by President Biden's team validates the observation by Barber and Theoharis regarding the "greatest possibility for change." In a paradigm shift of epic proportions, the new Treasury secretary, Janet Yellen, announced that the success of economic policies will be measured by their impact on race, gender equality, and climate change rather than the usual indicators of Gross Domestic Product or deficit ratios.

There is an old expression that "you get what you measure." When the measure of success is racial equity, gender equity and climate justice — not money — that is a seismic shift in the United States. This is a shift that has been called for and precipitated by the Poor People's Campaign, standing on the shoulders of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the warriors for justice who walked before and with him.

The Poor People's Campaign seven-point platform is both a fundamental and ambitious list, ranging from specific policies to broad, aspirational goals:

- COVID-19 relief that "meets the scale of the crisis" and directly addresses the pandemic's disproportionate harm to Black, Indigenous, people of color and "other vulnerable communities";

- Programs to put people back to work, with a focus on moving the economy to clean, renewable energy — but also restoring and expanding worker rights, including union rights;
- Ensuring health care for all;
- Defending and expanding voting rights — including proposals to end gerrymandering and rein in corporate money in electoral campaigns;
- Attacking institutional racism and white supremacy;
- Turning away from militarism and "endless wars" in favor of a commitment to peaceful diplomacy;
- Rejecting corporate greed and ending corporate monopoly.

GROUND COVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES				PACKAGE PRICING	
Size	Black and White	Color	Approx. Size (W x H)	Three Months/Three Issues: 15% off Six Months/Six Issues: 25% off Full Year/Twelve Issues: 35% off Additional 20% off ads with coupons	
Business card	\$49.95	\$65.95	2.5 x 1.5		
1/8	\$89.95	\$129.95	5 x 3 or 2.5 x 6.5		
1/6	\$129.95	\$165.95	5 x 4		
1/4	\$159.95	\$215.95	5 x 6.25		
1/2	\$299.95	\$399.95	10.25 x 6.5 or 5 x 13		
Full Page	\$495.95	\$669.95	10.25 x 13		

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Bethlehem Church is home of the Groundcover office

FEBRUARY 2021 EVENTS AT BETHLEHEM
Bethlehem has cancelled all in-person activities due to COVID-19.
Here are ways you can experience our 10 am worship service on Sundays:

Most Simple - Tune in to our live radio broadcast on WAAM 1600AM.
You can also listen to WAAM on Tune In by following this link
: <http://www.mainstreamnetwork.com/listen/player.asp?station=waam-am&listen=Listen+Live>.
(Click the shiny "play" button on the lower left of the page, ignoring any advertisements.)
• Facebook
Beginning at 9:55 Sunday, you will find our Live Video at Bethlehem's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/bethlehemuccA2>

• Following the 10 am service on Sunday, the video will be posted to the Bethlehem UCC website: www.bethlehem-ucc.org. We have begun posting the service to [Bethlehem's YouTube page](#), it will be available there at 10 am on Sundays.

Thank you all. We look forward to worshipping together.

Sunday Worship Times
10:00 am Sanctuary
streamed on Facebook

Tortellini and spinach soup

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:

28 ounces vegetable broth
1 package (9 ounces) refrigerator cheese tortellini
15 ounces white kidney or cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
1 can Italian diced tomatoes
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper
3 cups fresh baby spinach
3 tablespoons minced fresh basil
¼ cup shredded Asiago cheese

Directions:

In a large saucepan bring broth to a boil. Add tortellini then reduce heat to a simmer. Stir in beans, tomatoes, salt and pepper. Return to a simmer.



Cook until tortellini is tender (3 to 5 minutes). Stir in spinach and basil and simmer until spinach is wilted.

Serve topped with cheese.

This is my mother-in-law's recipe; it is very popular with the entire family. Enjoy!

Someone special

RONALD PAGERESKI
Groundcover contributor

He stands alone in the cold. A tear shivers on his cheek, slithers down his cheek, slithers to the street. Is it from the cold? Is it a tear from old?

Memories he'll always hold, in his heart is pain untold.

We see him standing there, but does anyone really care that he once was someone special?

A long fall from grace he had, circumstances fell like

bricks on him, tears now fill his eyes to the brim. But for the grace of God, we go there too, fate can quickly change, it's true. Let's use our way of seeing, he is also a human being, he still is someone special.



PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

2	9	3	6	1	5	7	4	8
8	6	5	7	9	4	1	3	2
4	1	7	8	3	2	6	9	5
3	5	9	4	7	1	2	8	6
1	8	6	5	2	9	4	7	3
7	4	2	3	8	6	9	5	1
5	7	1	2	4	3	8	6	9
9	3	8	1	6	7	5	2	4
6	2	4	9	5	8	3	1	7

1	J	I	V	E	C	H	I	M	P	B	M	A	J
14	O	N	E	L	G	E	N	O	A	L	I	L	O
17	S	T	E	A	M	I	R	O	N	S	U	D	O
20	H	O	R	N	S	I	T	S	A	D	R	A	G
23	D	E	C	K	L	E	E	D	G	I	N	G	
26	A	M	P	C	H	I	R	E	E	F			
31	R	I	O	T	A	L	A	S	N	O	F	A	T
39	I	N	T	E	R	I	O	R	P	A	I	N	T
42	D	I	A	N	E	S	M	O	G	S	O	R	E
45	T	S	A	R	I	R	K	P	O	E			
50	D	R	O	P	P	E	D	A	L	I	N	E	
55	R	E	C	E	S	S	E	D	O	L	M	O	S
60	A	C	H	E	H	M	O	N	E	T	W	O	R
64	M	A	I	D	I	M	P	E	L	A	L	A	I
67	A	P	P	S	P	E	T	E	S	Y	E	L	P



St. Francis invites you
to join in Mass by LiveStream:

Spanish: stfrancisa2.com/misa

English: stfrancisa2.com/mass

See our website for details on all worship services, events, and activities!

Due to Covid precautions, only registered parishioners of St. Francis are welcome to in-person services, and all must sign-up and register to be counted so that our numbers are within the acceptable range.

**Sunday 5pm mass will begin again on
Sunday, Feb 21st.**

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